

PHILOSOPHY & RELIGION UNDERGRADUATE COURSES

PHI 151 (H001)

Introduction to Philosophy

MW 9:45-11:15

Dr. Paula Smithka

Aristotle said: “For it is owing to their wonder that people both now begin and at first began to philosophize.”

Philosophy begins in wonder. It’s about asking fundamental questions—questions like, “Does God exist?”; “What is the nature of reality?”; “Is what I perceive really the way things are?”; “What is a Self?”; “Am I the same person over time?”; “What makes an action morally right?” Study philosophy and unlock your mind!

PHI 151 (H006)

Introduction to Philosophy

Online

Dr. Katarzyna Paprzycka Hausman (Dr. P.)

This course is an introduction to three major areas of philosophy: metaphysics (study of being), epistemology (study of knowledge) and ethics (study of morality). It will take into account both traditional and contemporary approaches. We will begin with some issues in the philosophy of religion: Can one prove (by means of mathematical or logical tools) that God exists? Is the existence of evil compatible with the existence of an all-good all-powerful being? We will then consider some issues in epistemology: Do we know (as opposed to merely believe) anything? Can we know what will happen in the future (scientists frequently make such claims to knowledge)? We will end with the consideration of some issues in ethics: Is morality relative? What does it mean to be moral? We will read excerpts from St. Anselm, Descartes, Locke, Hume, J.St. Mill, Kant as well as contemporary authors. The course is largely self-paced but you are required to meet five deadlines.

PHI 253 (H001)

Logic

Online

Dr. Katarzyna Paprzycka Hausman (Dr. P.)

The course teaches basic concepts and techniques in propositional logic and introduces basic concepts of predicate logic. After an introduction of the basic concepts of propositional logic, we will learn how to symbolize English sentences and arguments in logical terms. We will learn two techniques of determining whether arguments are valid or not: the truth table method and the natural deduction proof method. We will also learn to symbolize statements and arguments using the more powerful predicate logic.

Learning logic is like learning to swim. Like swimming, logical skills must be learned in systematic practice. This is also why most of the work for this course will involve students doing exercises. Some of them (training exercises) will be not be graded (they are required as a preparation but will not be counted toward the final grade), others (quizzes) will count toward the final grade. The course is divided into thirteen units; there are thirteen weekly quiz deadlines. Students will work with the Course Workbook, which provides detailed explanation of the concepts and techniques in each unit, plenty of worked-out examples, in-text exercises (as well as references to on-line exercises). The student’s task consists in carefully and systematically working through the Course Workbook units, doing all the exercises and taking the quizzes by the deadline.

PHI 171

Ethics and Good Living **MW 3:00-4:30 or 4:45-6:15** **Dr. Morgan Rempel**

What kinds of choices are “moral” choices, and how can we best make moral choices? Why should I follow moral rules? Is morality a matter of the head, the heart, or both? What is “conscience” and where does it come from? Does following my conscience necessarily mean I do the right thing? What gives life meaning? In this course we will consider questions such as these, with particular attention paid to exploring the role of ethics in “good living”.



REL 340

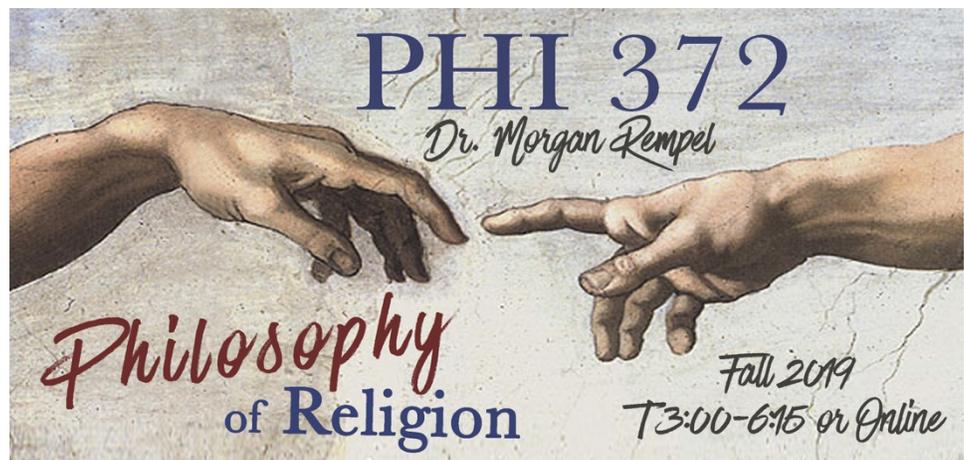
Beyond the Grave: Religion and the Afterlife **Online** **Dr. Amy Slagle**

Death is an inescapable fact of life, and all religious and philosophical traditions attempt to come to grips with it. This course examines death in light of the many ways humans have attempted to accept, overcome, deny, defeat, or transcend it. How did death originate? Are there good and bad ways to die? To grieve? How should we dispose of a corpse? Do we have a soul (or souls) and does it (or they) reincarnate? Is there an afterlife? Is immortality possible? Desirable? What techniques might help us achieve it? Religious traditions have attempted to answer these questions for millennia, and we will study how. Topics such as cremation, damnation, salvation, near-death experiences, mourning, grief, burial, and reincarnation will be explored in light of a variety of religious and philosophical traditions, both East and West.

PHI 372

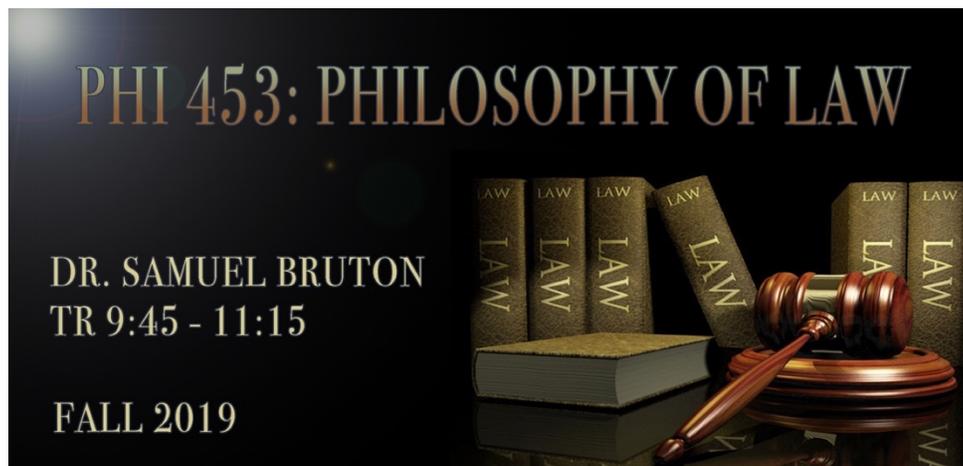
Philosophy of Religion **T 3:00-6:15** **Dr. Morgan Rempel**

An introduction to the philosophy of religion through the careful examination of classic philosophical, psychological and literary texts addressing the existence of God. Topics to be examined



will include the nature of God, arguments for and against the existence of God, the rationality of belief in God, the problem of evil, the relationship between religion and morality, and the unique character of Christianity.

PHI 453
Philosophy of Law
TR 9:45 – 11:15
Dr. Samuel Bruton



This class introduces students to perennial issues in the philosophy of law: the nature of legal authority, the relationship between law and morality, debates about the appropriate balance between legal regulation and individual liberty, and the justification of punishment. We will study important thinkers such as H. L. A. Hart, Ronald Dworkin, and John Stuart Mill. Also, we will examine contemporary debates about race and the criminal justice system, including issues at the forefront of much recent political activism in America. This course satisfies a required option for Philosophy majors in the Pre-law emphasis track.

A promotional graphic for PHI 406/506. The central image is a blue, glowing brain with lines radiating from it, set against a dark background. The title 'PHI 406/506' is written in large, white, bold, sans-serif font across the brain. To the left, there are three blue rectangular boxes with white text: 'Philosophy of Human Nature', 'MW 3:00 - 4:30', and 'Dr. Paula Smithka'. At the bottom left, there is a line of white text: 'For more info contact: paula.smithka@usm.edu'.

PHI 406/506
Philosophy of Human Nature
MW 11:30 – 1:00
Dr. Paula Smithka

‘Philosophy of Human Nature’ could be taken to mean a variety of things, given the many facets of human existence and our nature (if there is such a thing). However, in this class,

we will focus on the nature of the self (if there is one), personal identity, the nature of mind and its relation to the body, and the nature of consciousness, all of which are central questions for our existence.